

# Dorothy Vernon of Haddon Hall

## CHAPTER I

### I RIDE DOWN TO HADDON

SINCE I play no mean part in the events of this chronicle, a few words concerning my own history previous to the opening of the story I am about to tell you will surely not be amiss, and they may help you to a better understanding of my narrative.

To begin with an unimportant fact — unimportant, that is, to you — my name is Malcolm François de Lorraine Vernon. My father was cousin-german to Sir George Vernon, at and near whose home, Haddon Hall in Derbyshire, occurred the events which will furnish my theme.

Of the ancient lineage of the house of Vernon I need not speak. You already know that the family is one of the oldest in England, and while it is not of the highest nobility, it is quite gentle and noble enough to please those who bear its honored name. My mother boasted nobler blood than that of the Vernons. She was of the princely French house of Guise — a niece and ward to the Great Duke, for whose sake I was named.

My father, being a younger brother, sought adventure in the land of France, where his handsome person and engaging manner won the smiles of Dame Fortune and my mother at one and the same cast. In due time I was born, and upon the day following that great event my